

Miss the Girl

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Summary: When Nala falls for a new cub in the Pride Lands, called Moto, Simba is forced to confront his true feelings for his best friend, or risk losing her for ever.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: Can't Stop Looking

AN: I've been looking forward to this one for quite a while now, and finally it is here!

Miss the Girl

Chapter One: Can't Stop Looking

"Simba, how many times are we going to go through this?" Nala teased as she pinned Simba for about the millionth time down by the water hole.

"Until I pin you back!" Simba replied, smiling up at his best friend. "Even if it takes forever, I will pin you!"

"Forever is a really long time," Nala told him, "but I don't even think forever is *enough* time for you."

"Oh, yeah?" Simba challenged, staring into her sea-green eyes. "Well maybe you're just..."

Simba slowly stopped speaking as he found himself gazing into Nala's eyes, a dreamy smile forming on his face.

Wow... Simba thought with amazement. She looks really... pretty today. Her eyes are so... beautiful.

Nala was watching him curiously. "Uh... Simba? You okay?"

Simba shook himself back to reality, his dreamy smile disappearing. "Yeah... I'm okay," he replied, finding himself staring at Nala again, this time admiring her creamy fur. "Nice fur..." he commented, that dreamy smile returning to him.

Nala looked at her fur. "Yeah... I suppose it is pretty nice. Any special reason you're looking at it?"

"Uh... No," Simba replied, suddenly looking very nervous. "I just noticed it and... Uh... Thought it looked nice."

"Thanks, Simba," she said, smiling warmly at him.

Simba couldn't help but immediately notice her smile. It was so wonderful in so many ways. He could feel his insides starting to melt...

Wait, what? Simba shook himself again, trying to snap out of whatever his thoughts were focusing on today. *What is wrong with me today?* he groaned in his mind. *I just can't help but notice how pretty Nala looks today.*

Simba always found himself having these thoughts about Nala for quite a while now, but today it was just getting ridiculous. Where had all this come from all of a sudden? He couldn't stop looking or thinking about her!

"Do you want me to let you up?" Nala offered, still smiling. "Or are you just gonna keep looking at me like that all day?"

Simba didn't really mind if Nala kept him pinned down, but he didn't want to freak her out, so he felt forced to reply yes.

"Yeah, of course," Simba replied, as if it were a stupid question.

Nala rolled over, laying beside him. She looked him over. "Your fur's pretty nice, too," she told him.

Simba felt his heart skip a beat. "Thanks, Nala. You're a really great friend."

"Best friend," she added with a little giggle.

"Well aren't we the cute couple?" said a voice from behind them.

Simba and Nala both turned to see Zazu standing on the ground, his wings folded. He had a smile on his beak, as if he knew that something was going on between them.

Simba rolled his eyes. "Zazu, what do you want? You're not here to 'take care of us' again, are you?"

"Not at all," Zazu replied. "I was just flying by when I noticed you two seemed to be having a little moment together."

"Little moment?" Simba repeated. "What are you talking about?"

"You *know* what I'm talking about, Simba," Zazu replied. "It's quite obvious that you two have quite the attraction for one

another."

Simba and Nala looked at each other, their eyes narrowed. "Is this going somewhere?" Nala asked Zazu.

Zazu rolled his eyes. This was becoming painfully obvious. He knew that both of them knew what he knew. "I mean, just *look* at you two! Little seeds of romance blossoming in the savannah! Your parents will be thrilled. What with you being betrothed and all."

"Be-what?" Simba said, confused.

"Betrothed. Intended. Affianced," Zazu replied.

"Meaning?" asked Nala.

"One day you two are going to be married!" Zazu exclaimed.

"Yuck!" Nala exclaimed almost instantly.

Simba decided to wait for Nala's reaction before he decided on his. "Eww!" he exclaimed, although it didn't come across as convincing as he hoped it would. *Maybe it wouldn't be so bad...* Simba found himself thinking, before mentally slapping himself. *No! No! Bad Simba! Bad! It can't happen! It won't happen! Will it...?*

Oh well, he might as well try and deny it. "It can't marry her!" he exclaimed. "She's my *friend*."

"Yeah," Nala agreed. "It'd be too weird."

I don't care how weird it is, Simba thought, staring at her again.

"Sorry to burst your bubble, but you two turtledoves have no choice. It's a tradition going back generations..."

Across the other side of the water hole, a lonely cub sat all on his own, watching the commotion opposite him.

This was Moto, a lion cub with dark-brown fur and quite a large tuft of chocolate-coloured hair on his head, and right now he wasn't exactly focusing on the argument the two cubs were having with a Red-billed hornbill about marriage.

He was thinking about the one with the creamy fur and the beautiful sea-green eyes. She looked so... so beautiful to him. He knew she was called Nala – he'd been watching her for the past few days.

Nala... her name echoed in his mind. *What a beautiful name... It's the most beautiful name I've ever heard.*

Moto didn't have any friends – or family, for that matter. His parents had died quite a while ago, and since then he'd felt pretty lost in life, wandering from place to place wondering if he would ever find somewhere to fit in.

Luckily, it turned out the King of the Pride Lands had quite a sensitive spot when it came to orphans. The other day Moto had entered the Pride Lands by mistake, but after explaining his situation to King Mufasa, he was more than happy to let him stay.

Moto had trouble finding friends. No one really understood him, and they weren't really interested in getting to know him all that much either. No one really appealed to him...

Except for Nala, that is. Just the sight of her made his heart melt. The sound of her voice, the beauty in her eyes... He adored her so much.

And here he was listening to Nala talking about how she didn't want to get married to her best friend, Simba.

Moto was jealous of the arrogant little Prince. "He doesn't understand anything!" he exclaimed, feeling nothing but hate for Simba. "He doesn't deserve her! I'd give anything to be with her! *Anything!*"

"Did you say... 'anything'?" asked a voice from behind Moto.

Moto turned around to find a strange lion. Not because of his looks, but because of the strange staff with the cobra-like head he clasped in his paw.

"Who are you?" Moto asked the lion.

The lion smiled kindly. "You can call me Hago," he replied. "I couldn't help but overhear you, and I think I can help with your little... problem."

"How can you help?" Moto asked, a miserable look returning to his face.

Hago smiled evilly. "My dear boy, I don't think you know who I am."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: Irresistible

Chapter Two: Irresistible

"I possess certain magical powers, you know," Hago informed Moto. "Magical powers which I think may be of some use to you."

"Magical powers?" Moto exclaimed. "Yeah, right!"

Hago rolled his eyes. "It's true. I can do just about anything. Now, my dear boy, what is it that your heart desires the most?"

Moto thought for a moment, and looked across the water hole and at Nala. He smiled dreamily. "I want her," he answered, pointing at Nala.

Hago cast a glance over at Nala, and then smiled at Moto. "Well," he said with a chuckle, "that's easy. I could make you completely irresistible to her and her only. She'd fall for you in a heartbeat."

Moto suddenly perked up. "Really? You could do that?"

"Of course," Hago replied. "It's all too easy. But, in exchange for making you irresistible, I would want something in return."

"But I don't—"

"I'm not asking much," Hago interrupted. "Just a token, really, a trifle. What I want from you is... Prince Simba."

Moto's eyes widened. "Prince Simba?" Moto looked over at Simba and Nala, who were playing happily together. A wave of anger descended over Moto's face as he angrily turned back to Hago. "You want him?"

Hago nodded. "The troublesome Prince has messed up a lot of my dealings, and personally I'd like to see to it that he is punished for his actions. I believe we have a common enemy, don't we?"

"Yeah," Moto agreed. "He doesn't deserve to be friends with Nala! I'll be everything she wants!"

Hago smiled. "I like the way you think. You're right — he doesn't deserve her. *You* deserve her, and I can make that happen easily, if you bring Prince Simba to me."

Moto nodded. "Okay. I'll bring him to you. It'll be easy."

"I thought it might be," said Hago. "Very well. I shall turn you into a magnificent cub who the little girl won't be able to keep her paws off of."

Moto smiled. "So... how do you do it?"

"Simple," Hago replied, before aiming the cobra head of his staff at Moto's body. Two pink beams shot from the eyes and struck Moto in the chest, causing the outline of his whole body to glow pink for a few seconds. Eventually it faded away, and Moto looked at Hago, confused.

"Is that it?" Moto asked.

Hago nodded. "That's it. One look at you and she'll fall for you *instantly*."

Moto smiled. "Thanks. Finally I can be with the girl of my dreams!" he exclaimed before bounded off.

"Don't forget," Hago reminded the cub, causing him to turn around. "I want Prince Simba."

"I won't forget," Moto assured him. "I promise."

"Good."

The cub bounded off, and Hago started laughing maniacally. "Oh, Hago, you're a genius!" he told himself. "This plan is perfect! My two greatest enemies will be torn apart forever! That stupid little cub has inadvertently solved my worst problem!"

Hago had known all about Moto for days now, and had been secretly observing him while Moto secretly observed Nala.

He quickly realised that Moto was very exploitable. His weakness was his crush on Nala, and Hago was quick to find a way to exploit that weakness. By making Moto irresistible to her, he knew that Simba and Nala would be quickly torn apart. This had to be his greatest plan yet!

"So let's go over this one more time," said Simba to Nala. "We're supposed to get... married?"

Nala shrugged. "That's what Zazu said, didn't he?"

"Oh... Okay," Simba said, looking down at the ground.

Nala eyed him curiously. "Simba... are you trying to tell me that you don't actually *mind* marrying me?"

Simba laughed nervously. "What would give you that idea?"

"You don't sound too displeased about it," she told him.

I can't let her know that! Simba shouted in his head, thinking about how his feelings for his best friend had gradually evolved into quite a crush for her. It had become obvious to him now. Why else would he feel this way around her all the time?

"Come on, Nala," said Simba. "Why would I want to marry you?"

Nala suddenly looked offended. "Why? What's wrong with me?"

Simba smiled. "Nothing's wrong with you. You're great!"

"Then why don't you want to marry me?" she asked, sounding now as if she was agreeing to the idea.

"But I thought you said... Wait, I'm confused now."

Nala rolled her eyes and looked away from him. He was so cute when he didn't understand things!

She smiled, looking back at Simba. He had a thoughtful look on his face, like he was trying hard to figure things out.

For Nala, it didn't need much explanation. Ever since Zazu had told them that they were arranged to be married, she couldn't help but *love* the idea! She had only *pretended* to sound disgusted – she didn't want Simba finding out, because she knew he didn't feel the same way about her. Just her luck... She had a crush on the most awkward person she could have a crush with! Why couldn't she have liked someone... Wait, *who* was that?

A cub was making his way towards Simba and Nala, a confident smile on his face. As Nala watched him get closer and closer, she felt her heart beat faster and faster, and she felt herself beginning to blush behind her fur.

"Who's *this* guy?" Simba asked, already feeling a certain dislike for this cub who was coming towards them. "Looks like a weirdo to me. Right, Nala?"

Simba turned to Nala, and saw she had a dreamy smile and a dazed expression on her face, like she was lost in some kind of trance. Simba waved a paw in front of her face. "Hello? Nala? Hello!"

Nala continued to just stare at the cub, feeling her insides melt. *He's cute...* she thought. *Very cute.*

"Have you fallen asleep with your eyes closed or something?" Simba asked, trying to get her to snap out of it. "Because in case you haven't noticed, you're not talking at all."

The cub smiled warmly at them, angering Simba greatly. Just who did this guy think he was? Strutting about the place like the most irresistible cub going?

"Okay, who are you?" Simba asked in a tone that told the cub he wasn't welcome at all.

The cub laughed. "You don't know me?" he said. "Come on, *everyone* knows me. I'm Moto," the cub introduced himself.

"Never heard of you," Simba told him.

"Well, you must have been living under a rock," Moto told him.

"A rock worth living under," Simba muttered quietly.

Nala immediately swooped in front of Simba, ready to speak to Moto. He was just so attractive... She couldn't pass up this opportunity!

AN: Oh... this isn't good, is it? Which is what makes it so brilliant! Ha ha!

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Jealous, Simba?

AN: Two more chapters, go, go, go!

Chapter Three: Jealous, Simba?

"Hi!" Nala cheerily greeted Moto, earning a shocked reaction from Simba.

"Nala!" he cried. "What are you—"

"Why, hello there!" Moto exclaimed. "What's a pretty girl like you doing in a pride like this?"

Nala blushed and giggled. "Well... I..."

"Oh, brother," Simba said, rolling his eyes.

"How come I've never seen you around before?" Nala asked, getting closer to Moto so their noses were almost touching.

"Well, I'm new here," Moto informed her. "Just got back from another pride, far away from here."

"Really?" said Nala, interested. He had her full attention. "Well... what were you doing in that pride?"

"And why don't you go back?" Simba asked with a grin.

Moto ignored him, because he knew he had Nala under his spell. "Well... I was offered to become the pride's youngest King, but I decided not to."

"Huh?" Simba exclaimed, not believing a word of this.

"The pride's youngest King..." said Nala in amazement. He really was something else! "So... why didn't you become the King there?"

"Well..." Moto raised his eyebrows cockily. "A King needs a Queen."

Simba's eyes widened when he realised what Moto was trying to do. He was trying to steal Nala from him! That wasn't fair! She was his best friend, and he wasn't going to let anyone take her from him! He was just after her for her looks, and *nothing* else. He just wanted someone to kiss a whole lot!

"You can't be serious!" Simba argued.

"Actually, I am," Moto informed him. "I'm very respected in a lot of other prides. I've had a few offers now to lead some of them, but I've declined them all kindly."

"You sure have a lot of experience, Moto," Nala told him admiringly.

"So do I!" Simba stated, trying to catch Nala's attention. "Who's the Prince here?"

"Uh... me?" suggested Moto. "In five prides, actually."

Simba narrowed his eyes at Moto. He was taking things just a little bit too far now. Trying to steal Nala was one thing, but... Actually, that was *all* he cared about! This cub was a total show-off – he didn't deserve *anything* from Nala!

"Yeah, great, great," Simba muttered, trying to pull Nala away. "Well, it was nice meeting you, but we really have to go."

Nala broke free of Simba. "We don't have to go anywhere, Simba," Nala told him. "Besides, I want to stay here with..." She took a deep, dreamy sigh. "Moto."

"What?" Simba exclaimed. "Why?"

"He's just so... wonderful," Nala replied, turning back to Moto.

Moto rubbed his chest and smiled, so full of himself. "Well... I am pretty irresistible."

I can't believe this guy! Simba thought angrily. *And Nala actually likes him? But... But I thought she liked... me...*

"How about we go for a walk around the water hole?" Moto offered Nala, who was smiling from ear-to-ear.

Simba tried to intervene. "Actually—"

"That'd be great!" Nala agreed almost instantly. "Really, *really* great!"

"But, Nala—" Simba began to complain.

"Simba, it's fine!" Nala interrupted. She laughed. "What's wrong with you today?"

"Nothing's wrong with me," Simba replied. He then spoke in a low whisper so Moto wouldn't hear. "It's just him I don't like."

Nala's eyes widened. "What's wrong with Moto?" she asked. "He's awesome!"

Simba sighed. "Whatever you say," he said quietly.

Nala joined Moto by his side. "Are we going, Moto?" she asked, the look in her eyes showing that she was amazed every time she looked at him.

Moto smiled. "Of course. Come on," he said, gesturing for her to follow, which she willingly did.

Simba held his ground, not really wanting to move from his spot. He extremely disliked Moto, and would love nothing more than to see him disappear forever.

Nala turned to see Simba hadn't moved. "You coming, Simba?"

Simba sighed and looked down at the ground, thinking things over. If he didn't go with them, then at least he wouldn't have to be around that arrogant cub Moto any more.

But then Nala would still go with him, because she obviously had an attraction for him. Simba knew that Moto was only using her for her looks, and in the long run Nala would just probably end up with a broken heart. He didn't even want Nala to bother with that stupid guy.

He decided he would have to go, because he knew it was his duty. He always said he would look after Nala, and he wasn't one for lying to his best friend. He wasn't going to let Moto get his paws on her. He'd have to go through Simba first!

"Fine," Simba mumbled, walking over to Nala and Moto. "Are we going or what?"

"Simba, are you okay?" Nala asked, noticing Simba looked a little upset over something.

"I'm okay," Simba replied.

Nala turned to Moto as they walked. "So, Moto," she said with a little giggle, "tell me more about the incredible things you've done."

"Well, okay," Moto replied. "Well, I first got asked to be a King when there were these angry hyenas trying to intrude the pride. With a bit of my excellent fighting skills, I managed to scare them away. They never came back, and I'm not surprised, because I am so brilliant and cool."

"Am I actually hearing this?" Simba exclaimed aloud.

"The whole pride thought I was a hero, and I can't say I blame them. So they asked me to be King, but I couldn't because I was kind of busy helping starving cubs in a different pride..."

One hour later, Moto had finished telling his ninth story about how heroic and great he was, and Simba found himself red with anger. What a show-off! He thought he was so great, didn't he? Stupid Moto with his stupid stories...

"... So the chicken said 'Moto, how can we ever thank you?' So then I said, 'Seeing you happy is a good enough reward for me.' It felt really good to help someone out when they're in trouble."

"Boy, I'll say..." said Nala in amazement, her eyes fixed on Moto. She was now completely obsessed with him, thinking he was the handsomest cub around.

"Oh, come on!" Simba exclaimed loudly in anger. "That never happened! You're lying!"

Moto sighed. "I see what's happening. You're jealous," he said, glancing at Nala. "I get that from a lot of people."

"I'm not jealous!" Simba stated. "I've done way more than you!"

Moto raised an eyebrow. "Simba, that's very cute, but I doubt you've done more than me."

"I have so!" Simba argued. "I've stopped a guy from stealing all this power and I've rescued Nala from hyenas and—"

"Oh, that reminds me!" Moto exclaimed. "Did I tell you about the time I defeated a whole group of hyenas with one paw?"

Simba growled loudly, his fury multiplying by ten.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: The Right One

Chapter Four: The Right One

"I've had enough of you and your show-off stories!" Simba told Moto angrily. "Seriously, I don't think I can take much more!"

"Simba, you are sounding kind of jealous," Nala told him, not believing Simba, but believing Moto and his pack of lies. "You're acting like a freak."

"No, I'm not acting like a freak!" Simba roared at the top of his voice, causing everything in the Pride Lands to go quiet instantly.

Moto broke the seemingly endless silence. "Anyway..." he said, turning to Nala. "Since we've spent all this time together, I think it's time I told you something."

Nala grinned. Did he like her? She sure hoped so, because that would make her day! She'd fallen for Moto since she first saw him; she didn't know exactly *why*, but it just felt... right to her. Like Moto would be the only person she'd be happy with. He was the perfect guy for her.

Moto sighed and smiled at her, his face showing no signs of nervousness. He was cocky, confident and so sure of himself. He knew he couldn't fail. "Nala," he spoke softly, "I've felt a certain... attraction for you since we first met, and I was wondering if you'd like to go out with me?"

"What?" Simba exclaimed in disbelief. This couldn't be true... It couldn't! This wasn't happening! This was worse than that nightmare Simba had the other night! This was just horrible!

Nala's eyes were transfixed on Moto's, feeling exactly the same way as he did. Her heart was pounding harder than it ever had before, telling her that she just *had* to be with Moto. She knew he was the right one in her heart.

Nala laughed, looking away from him. "Well, it's funny you should say that, because—"

"Nala, wait!" Simba interrupted, attempting desperately to get Nala to reconsider this.

"Simba, what is it?" Nala asked.

"You can't seriously like him!" Simba argued.

"Well, for your information, I do," Nala told him.

"You're not thinking about this!" Simba exclaimed. "You've barely known him for more than an hour! You can't go out with him!"

"I can go out with whoever I want to!" Nala shot back. "You can't stop me!"

Moto nodded in agreement, still smiling. "Yeah, Simba. Chill out."

"I don't need to chill out!" Simba snapped at him angrily. "Stay away from her! She's *my* girl!"

Nala's eyes widened, becoming even angrier now. "What do you mean, *your* girl?"

Simba gasped in shock when he realised what he had just said. "Look... I didn't mean to... What I meant was..."

"You *are* jealous!" Nala accused, pointing at him. "You just want me all to yourself because you don't have any other friends! And if you see me having fun with anyone else you instantly hate them! You're so selfish!"

"Nala, that's not true!" Simba argued. "You should be shouting at him!" he told her, pointing at Moto.

"Him?" Nala exclaimed. "Who's the one who thought he owned me? Oh yeah, *you*! Moto is the nicest cub I've ever met, and I'm sure he won't try to order me around!"

"Nala, you're wrong!" Simba shot back. "Can't you see that?"

Nala frowned. "You know what, Simba? You're not my best friend any more. How do you like that?"

"I love it!" Simba replied without thinking about what he was saying.

"Good!"

Simba looked down at the ground, finally coming to terms with what had just happened. He and Nala were no longer friends.

Moto turned to Nala, a cruel smile on his face. "Come on, Nala. Let's go somewhere else and talk about me."

"Great idea!" Nala agreed, smiling back at him.

And together, the two cubs walked off. Nala didn't look back at Simba. Not once. She was completely over him! Some friend he turned out to be! She was way better off with Moto!

Simba stared sadly at the ground. He was all on his own, with no one by his side. He could feel an ache in his heart. An ache of loneliness. An ache of loss.

He had just lost Nala, his best friend in the whole world. Moto had successfully taken her from him, presumably forever. Now what was he going to do? Simba knew he couldn't make friends with anyone else, because they had all rejected him ages ago.

He wouldn't want to make friends with anyone else anyway. Nala was the only person he really felt right with. The two of them were so alike. Simba didn't want anyone else. He was happy with her.

It was too late now though. Far too late. Simba now had no one. He felt like he had been torn apart, because he really did like Nala. And in recent times, he found himself to like her more than just a friend...

I have to admit it now, Simba told himself. I had a crush on her. A big crush. A big, big crush. He sighed sadly. *There's nothing I can do about it now. She's gone. Forever.*

Out of everything Simba and Nala had been through together – fighting Hago, Scar and hyenas – the one person Nala had feelings for was a cub who she'd barely known for more than an hour. A bragging, cocky, self-confident cub.

Part of Moto reminded Simba of himself. Only Moto was about ten times worse than Simba. When Simba bragged to Nala, he always did it in a joking way. He never actually meant it.

Moto, on the other hand, *did* mean it. He was telling lie after lie after lie, and Simba knew that Moto would continue lying to Nala as they engaged in a relationship together. He had a feeling Moto would eventually get bored of Nala, and he would then break her heart, because her feelings for him were so strong. Simba had no idea what she saw in that cub, but he knew it was going to end in tears for her.

Simba tried to fight back his tears, but he found he just couldn't. They fell to the ground, thick and fast. He didn't know what to do. He was lost.

Slowly, Simba found the strength to walk away from where he was standing, wanting to find somewhere comfortable he could cry in peace.

AN: Ouch. I just split up Simba and Nala. I'm so horrible!

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Strange Comfort

AN: Wow, my reviews shot through the roof today. Thank you so much! I feel it's only right to give you more chapters.

Chapter Five: Strange Comfort

Simba sat up against the tree where he first met Nala, continuing to cry, each tear falling to the ground making him sadder and sadder.

It's all Moto's fault, Simba thought angrily, intent on blaming him again and again and again. *All his fault... Moto... Moto... Moto!*

Simba lashed out at the ground, slashing it furiously with his claws. "I hate him!" Simba screamed. "I hate Moto! I hate his name, the way he looks, everything about him! I want him to *die!*"

"You know, you should check if there's someone sleeping in a tree before you start shouting," said a familiar voice from above Simba, interrupting his angry rant on Moto.

Simba looked up to see Zazu, perched on top of a branch. He looked tired, and Simba realised he had just woken Zazu up.

"What are you doing up there?" Simba asked.

Zazu fluttered from the branch down to the ground. "This tree is quite a favourite of mine. Very comfortable to nest in. I have a better question: what are *you* doing down here?"

Simba looked down at the ground, feeling his misery returning to him. "I don't want to talk about it," he muttered.

Zazu could see instantly something was troubling the young Prince. After all, Zazu knew his observational skills were almost perfect – he could tell what people were thinking just by looking at them. And it was clear to Zazu that something had seriously upset Simba. It looked like he had been crying; his eyes were all red and puffy.

"Oh, Simba, you can tell me," Zazu informed him. "Isn't it better to get the sadness out of your system?"

"I don't think I ever *will* get rid of the sadness," Simba told Zazu, meaning every word of it. He felt broken.

"I must say I've never seen you like this before. What's wrong?" Zazu asked.

Simba decided he might as well explain the situation. Although the *last* person he thought he would explain it to was Zazu.

"Well, a while ago this new guy called Moto came over to us, and he started talking about how 'cool' and 'awesome' he was. And then Nala started to get a crush on him, and then he asked her out! I tried to get her to think clearly, but then she started shouting at me, and said I wasn't her best friend any more! Then they... they left."

Zazu was left wide-eyed. "Well... this may sound like an odd question to you, Simba, but... were you, by any chance, just a tad jealous?"

Simba glared at him. "Why does everybody say that?" Simba exclaimed. "I'm not jealous!"

"I think you are," Zazu told him. "I think you're very jealous."

"Why would I be jealous?" Simba asked. "I have nothing to be jealous about!"

"Trust me, Simba, you do. Now, I'm going to ask you a question and I advise you to answer it honestly: do you have feelings for Nala?"

"Define feelings," Simba instructed.

Zazu sighed. "Do you have a crush on her?" he asked, in terms Simba would understand.

Simba turned nervous. "Uh... Is it hot in here or is it just me?"

"Answer the question," said Zazu.

Simba gulped. "Kinda..." he said hesitantly.

"I knew it!" Zazu exclaimed. "It was so obvious. I'm quite glad you finally admitted it."

"Well, she's just so... amazing," Simba explained. "She has a great smile and beautiful eyes, and her personality is so fun! I just want to grab her and cuddle her and tell her how much I—"

Simba stopped talking when he saw the look Zazu was giving him. "Well, that seemed to have confirmed it," Zazu said upon hearing Simba. "You appear to have quite a big crush on her."

"I really would like her to be my girlfriend," Simba admitted. "But... I'm a little bit shy when it comes to stuff like... that."

Zazu laughed. "You? Shy? That sounds quite absurd, Simba. You always seemed so over-confident to me."

"But this is something else, Zazu," Simba told him. "I just feel really nervous about it. I don't think she even likes me back. You saw how she acted when you said we were 'betrothed'."

"And I saw how *you* acted when I said you two were betrothed. You lied. You thought it was disgusting. But now I see the truth, which was quite obvious to me from the beginning. Why do you think you were betrothed in the first place? You were almost certain to have feelings for each other. That's how close you were. Don't you understand now?"

"Well, it's no use now," said Simba. "We're not friends now, thanks to *Moto*."

"Well, you could always try and make amends," Zazu suggested. "I don't think Nala will be very happy when she realises what she's missing out on."

"How could I do that?" Simba asked.

"Just tell her how you feel, Simba," Zazu replied. "I'm quite sure she feels the same way."

Zazu turned around to fly off, but now before Simba stopped him. "Zazu, wait!" Simba cried.

Zazu turned back around to face Simba. "Yes, young master?"

Simba smiled. "Thank you."

Now *that* was a rare occurrence. Zazu didn't think Simba would ever say thank you to him.

"Any time," said Zazu, before flying off, leaving Simba on his own again.

Does she feel the same way? Simba asked himself in his mind. *Well, she did say she didn't mind kissing me when we had that bet... Maybe... she did have a crush on me...*

Simba argued against this idea. *No, she couldn't have! She has a crush on stupid Moto, remember?*

Yeah, but that doesn't mean she didn't have a crush on you before he came along. Although she can't have liked me that much if she turned to Moto as soon as he showed up.

Simba continued to argue with himself, having trouble with deciding what to do. *Why don't I just tell her?* he exclaimed. *Probably because she'd hate me for it, I guess. As if she didn't hate me enough already. I'm still worried about her. Moto will break her heart, I'm sure of it! He's just in it for the kissing! How can Nala fall for someone like that?*

And then it hit Simba. *She wouldn't. She'd never have a crush on someone like Moto. He's way too much of a show-off. More than me, and that's surprising. Since when does Nala like guys like that? She hates all the cubs in the pride. They were mean to her!*

Simba started to express his thoughts aloud. "Does that mean... Moto's done something to her? Made her like him somehow? But how could that happen? He doesn't have magical powers! That's the job of the freak with the staff!"

Simba sighed. "But... if I let her run away with Moto then I'll never be friends with her again. I'll lose her forever, and I don't want that. I have to keep her safe, and if that means I have to go through Moto then I will."

Simba stood up, knowing what he had to do.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Simba Intervenes

Chapter Six: Simba Intervenes

"... And it turned out that it wasn't an orange, but a mango!" Moto finished, causing Nala to erupt with laughter.

They were both sitting in the middle of a field in the late evening, waiting for night to arrive so they could watch the stars. Moto was telling her his 'true' stories to pass the time.

Moto knew just the right stories to tell, to make her interested and to make her laugh. Hago had granted him that power. He knew everything there was to know to make her happy. Nala was going to be his girlfriend... *forever*.

"You are so funny!" Nala told Moto.

Moto smiled cockily. "I'm a lot of other things, too."

"I know," Nala agreed, grinning from ear-to-ear, totally infatuated with him. She looked down at the ground, speaking nervously. "It's funny... I feel like you're the perfect person for me, Moto. You feel so... right."

Moto nodded. "You're the perfect girl for me, Nala, and I'm really glad you feel the same way. I take it that means you don't want to go back to Simba, then?"

Nala instantly became angered at the mention of his name. "Don't *ever* mention his name," she suddenly snapped.

"Why not?" Moto asked innocently, knowing full well what her reasons were.

"I *hate* him!" she stated angrily. "I can't believe I was ever friends with him! He is such a jerk!"

"So you never had a crush on him, then?" Moto asked, curious.

Nala gagged, disgusted by the idea. "No way! He's so unattractive. Nothing like you, Moto," she said softly, snuggling up to him. "You're so strong, and proud, and handsome."

"I know," said Moto, as they got close to each other, staring into the eyes of one another. "I am a pretty amazing guy. Nothing like your – *old* – friend Simba. Forget all about him, Nala."

"Believe me, I have," she told him. "I never want to see him again. I want to be with you, Moto. Forever."

"Let's run away together," Moto suggested. "We could have our own pride. I'll be the King, and you can be the Queen."

"That sounds perfect," Nala replied, loving every word that came out of Moto's mouth. She felt nothing but the deepest of love for him. He was 'The One'. She was sure of it. So sure of it that she wanted to kiss Moto there and then. In fact, she *would*.

"So, how about it?" said Moto. "You want a kiss?"

Nala nodded. "I would love nothing more, Moto."

Their faces got closer and closer to each other, ready for a kiss. Moto was extremely excited – this was it! The moment Nala would be his forever!

They were just about to kiss when something collided with Moto, causing him to roll across the field.

Shocked, Nala looked up to see someone was on top of Moto, attacking him. She walked closer, and she could see that it was Simba who was attacking him!

Simba and Moto scuffled on the ground. Simba kept him held down while Moto pathetically tried to fight back. If Nala was thinking clearly, then she would have noticed Moto didn't look like quite the fighting expert he had claimed to be earlier. However, she was blinded by her love for him, and the only person she didn't trust right now was Simba.

"Keep your paws off of her!" Simba warned Moto as he struggled to break free of Simba's grasp.

"Simba, get off him!" Nala cried, pushing Simba off Moto and knocking him to the ground.

"Thank you, Nala," Moto said as he got up, dusting himself off. "He caught me by surprise for a second there."

Simba got to his feet. "Yeah, right!" Simba exclaimed. "You're a liar and you know it!"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Moto said casually.

"Simba, can't you get it through your thick skull that we don't want you around?" asked Nala angrily.

"Nala, you need to think straight! Moto isn't who you think he is! He's just making all of this up! If you stay with him then he'll break your heart!" Simba tried to tell her, but Nala was having none of it. The only person she would listen to was Moto.

"Simba, shut up!" Nala snapped. "The only person who's lying here is *you*! Can't you see me and Moto are happy together?"

"He's just made you *think* that!" Simba said. He wasn't going to lose her, even if it killed him. He needed to get her to realise that Moto was a faker. "You like me! I'm your best friend! I know that, and so do you too!"

"Still jealous, huh?" Nala retorted. "Simba, you'll just have to face facts that you'd never make a good boyfriend to me. See Moto? He's strong, tough, muscle-bound and good-looking. He's perfect. You? You're thin, scrawny, and that tuft on your head looks stupid."

"But I like my tuft," Simba said, offended, rubbing the top of his head.

Nala turned to Moto. "Now can you see why I don't like him?"

"Nala, he's done something to you. I'm sure of it. If you just—"

"I don't want to hear any more, Simba!" Nala interrupted. "Let's get out of here, Moto, before I get *really* mad."

"Good idea," Moto agreed, as he and Nala walked away from the field, leaving Simba stunned.

His mouth was open in shock. "She really hates me..." Simba realised quietly, his hope diminishing fast.

It didn't look like Simba's plan had gone too well. So much for Nala pretending not to like him. Now it looked like she absolutely despised him. It was like they were the worst of enemies. Nala seemed to have forgotten how much she adored Simba as her best friend.

"There's no chance," Simba stated, sinking to the ground in defeat. "What am I gonna do without her?"

Sounds like you're going to have to live out the rest of your life on your own, Simba said in his head. You'll die on your own. The saddest King to ever rule the Pride Lands.

Simba didn't want that. Nala was now someone necessary for Simba. He wanted her back. He *needed* her back. Moto just kept making things worse, though. As long as he was around Nala, Simba was powerless.

Simba slowly got up. "Okay," he said. "One more try."

AN: Looks like Simba's going to make one last attempt to make things better. Will it work? All shall be revealed in tomorrow's conclusion!

***Chapter 7*: Chapter 7: Hago Demands a Result**

AN: I bet you've all been waiting for the end, right? Well, wait no longer!

Chapter Seven: Hago Demands a Result

Nala and Moto lay in another field, far away from the one Simba had interrupted their intimate moment in.

It was now night, and the beautiful stars were out in the night sky, as per usual. Nala had her head on Moto's chest, nuzzling it softly. She adored him so much...

"So, how about that kiss?" Moto asked, doing his cocky smile routine again.

"I was just going to ask you the same thing," Nala revealed, their faces getting closer to each other again.

Just as they were about to kiss again, something interrupted them. Although this time – surprisingly – it wasn't Simba.

Someone grabbed Moto and shoved him to the ground. "Okay, where is he you little brat?" a voice Nala recognised instantly asked.

Nala got up and saw Hago was looking threateningly down at Moto, pointing his cobra staff at his face.

Moto laughed nervously in response. "About that..."

Hago narrowed his eyes. "You promised me Prince Simba. I thought you would be a great asset, but it appears not. And I so despise it when people don't do what I say."

"Moto, what's going on?" Nala asked, confused.

An evil grin spread across Hago's face. "I thought you wouldn't be too far away. After all, Moto is so irresistible, isn't he?"

"Hey, this whole 'disobeying you' thing won't count against my powers, will it?" Moto asked.

Hago looked down at Moto. "I'm afraid your usefulness has run out, Moto. I'm afraid I have to... revoke your powers."

"Re-what?" said Moto.

Hago sighed, putting a paw to his face. "Good help is so hard to find these days."

"Can someone please explain this to me?" Nala exclaimed.

Hago looked at Nala. "Watch and find out, my dear." With that, Hago pointed the eyes of the cobra head on his staff at Moto. Two red beams shot out from the eyes and struck Moto, causing the outline of his body to glow an ominous red. A few seconds later, Moto stopped glowing. He no longer had the power of irresistibility.

Nala found herself staring at Moto, and instantly she felt all her feelings for him disappear. He didn't look attractive to him, he didn't look handsome and he didn't look strong. He was the last person Nala would ever have a crush on.

"Don't you understand, my dear?" Hago asked Nala. "Moto here had such an attraction for you, so I granted him the power of irresistibility. I knew you'd instantly fall for him, which was what made it so easy."

"Why would you do that?" Nala asked.

"To break you and Prince Simba up, of course," Hago replied, an evil smile on his face. "You're much easier to defeat when you're not together."

And Nala gasped when she realised the horrible things she had done to her best friend. She'd horribly insulted him, and told him she didn't like him. The poor guy... He must be heartbroken.

Hago took advantage of this, deciding to bring Nala down a bit more. "It's all your fault, you know. Falling for the scam so easily, I mean."

"It's not my fault!" Nala argued, although deep down she kind of believed it was her fault.

"But it *is*!" Hago accused. "It is your fault, Nala! You should have trusted your best friend! Instead, you chose to trust a cub

you'd known for more than an hour. You caused this, Nala! *You!* You're an *awful* excuse for a friend!"

Nala looked down at the ground, upset. She *was* an awful excuse for a friend. How could she do that to Simba? Simba had always been kind and friendly to her, and what did she give him in return? She had reduced him to an emotional wreck by falling for a cub she'd hardly known.

"And now Simba will die because of you!" Hago continued, pointing at her with his magical staff. "I think I'll kill you first, though. It'll crush Simba a little bit more, since he still likes you."

Now *that* was cruelty. He'd kill her just to break Simba's heart some more. She figured she deserved the death, though, for mistreating him so badly.

"I think I'll give you the old brain overload," Hago said to her. "A painful death for an annoying little cub."

"Go ahead," Nala urged, closing her eyes and awaiting her fate. She stood there, eyes closed, waiting to experience a painful end.

Only... her death never came.

Nala opened her eyes to see someone was fighting Hago! And that someone was...

Simba?

Yes! Yes, it was Simba! He'd wrenched Hago's staff out of his paw and flung it across the field. He was now on Hago's back, slashing at him with all his strength.

Nala felt her heart begin to race. She felt so overjoyed to see him again!

Simba jumped in front of Hago and slashed him in the face, causing Hago to fall onto the ground, unconscious. He was defeated.

Nala looked around, and noticed Moto seemed to have escaped. Hopefully for good.

Simba made sure Hago was really unconscious, and then walked towards Nala, a sad look on his face.

Nala tried to talk to him. "Simba, I—"

"I know, Nala," Simba interrupted. "I know you probably didn't need saving and I know I should have stayed away." He sighed and looked into her eyes. "But I just wanted to tell you that... that I understand now. I understand that you don't want to be my friend anymore, and you want to be with Moto. But I just want to say thank you."

Nala noticed he had tears in his eyes now.

"I wanted to say thank you because you were the best friend I could ever hope to have, and I'm gonna miss you."

With that, Simba walked past Nala, heading home alone. Nala – who too had tears in her eyes – watched him leave. She wanted to go after him, but she felt like she was paralysed. She just stood there, watching her best friend disappear.

The next morning, Simba was curled up by the tree where he and Nala first met each other, thinking about how miserable he was going to be for the rest of his life without her.

She's probably better off without me, anyway, Simba thought to himself. Aw, who am I kidding? I'm just trying to avoid the fact that I miss her. I wish she'd just come back to me, but that's never gonna happen... Never...

Simba couldn't help himself – he started to cry again. He really was affected by this. Nala was the most important person to him, and to lose her just felt... wrong. Really, really wrong. He wanted her back, so, so much...

But there was no chance of that ever happening. She was with Moto, and he would most likely never see her again. *Never.*

"Simba?" a voice Simba thought he would never hear again spoke softly.

Simba's eyes widened, and he looked up to see Nala standing a few feet away from him, a shy look on her face.

Simba didn't say anything, because he was so shocked to see her again. And Moto wasn't around, either, making Simba

confused. Just why was she here?

"Simba, I just wanted to say that..." She sighed. "I'm sorry. What I did was stupid, and I should have listened to you. I know I should have trusted you, and I'm really, really sorry. I didn't mean a word of what I said, and I understand if you don't want to see me ever again."

Nala turned around and slowly walked away, realising that her and Simba's friendship was as good as over. She'd blown it all because of some stupid cub who had a crush on her. She was so stupid to fall for it!

Nala decided to take one last glance at her former best friend, and turned around to see...

Simba, with a big grin on his face, holding his paws out for a big hug.

Nala realised instantly that Simba wanted to be her friend again, and she sprinted towards him, leaping into his paws and hugging him tightly.

Simba hugged her back, feeling whole again now that Nala was once again his best friend.

"I've missed you so much!" Simba exclaimed.

"Me too!" said Nala, not letting go of him. "I can't believe how stupid I've been. Simba, I—"

"Nala, it doesn't matter," Simba interrupted. "I'm just glad to have you back. Are we friends now?"

Nala grinned. "*Best* friends."

As they stared into each other's eyes, they heard someone clear their throat from next to them.

Looking at the person next to them, they realised it was Moto, who had a nervous look on his face.

Both Simba and Nala narrowed their eyes at him. "What do you want?" Simba demanded.

Moto sighed. "I just didn't want to leave you two on bad terms, that's all," he replied. "Look, Nala, I'm really sorry about what I did. It was wrong of me to make a deal with that stupid wizard guy."

"Wait a minute, *what* stupid wizard guy?" Simba asked, having a feeling about who Moto was talking about.

"You didn't know?" said Moto, confused. "Well, I kinda made a deal with this guy. He said he'd make me irresistible to Nala if I brought you to him. I just lied about all that stuff I said I did. None of it's true. Actually, I'm just an orphan. I haven't done anything spectacular at all." He sighed. "I just hope you can forgive me."

Simba and Nala studied Moto's expression, and realised he seemed legit. He really did look like he was sorry.

Simba smiled. "Okay... I forgive ya."

"Me, too," Nala told him, nodding.

Moto smiled back at them. "Thanks, guys." Moto looked around. "Well, I guess I'd better get out of here."

"Where are you going?" Simba asked.

Moto shrugged. "Anywhere. I think I'll go find my own adventure someplace else. But before I go, Simba, there is just one thing I wanted to tell you."

Moto whispered in Simba's ear. "If I was the King, then I know who I'd pick to be the Queen."

Simba looked up at Moto, who just smiled and ran off, beginning his journey for an adventure of his own.

"What did he say?" Nala asked, as she and Simba looked at each other again.

Simba smiled. "Oh, nothing." Simba cleared his throat and begun to try and tell her something important. "Nala, there's something important I want to tell you."

She smiled down at him. "Yes, Simba?"

"I just wanted to say I... I..." Simba tried to confess how he felt about her, but he found that he just couldn't get the words out. He was too shy. He just didn't have the courage to admit how much he really adored her. "I..." He smiled. "I think it's

good to have you back."

"It's nice to be back, Simba," she told him.

Simba knew he had failed again in his efforts to express that he had a crush on his best friend. However, in his mind, he vowed that one day he would tell Nala how he truly felt about her. One day.

The End

AN: Looks like Simba's still a bit shy. I'm sure he'll overcome his shyness sooner or later, though. Anyway, you can catch some more action in the next story, coming soon!

NEXT TIME: Sarabi and Mufasa leave one day to sort out an issue in a different pride, and leave Zazu in charge of things. Scar sees this as the perfect opportunity to take over the Pride Lands, and unfortunately, so does Hago. Can Simba and Nala protect the pride for just one day?